

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

EB-07 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00 LAB-04 SIL-01

PM-04 H-02 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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TAGS: ELAB EAIR SWEL IS
SUBJ: STRIKES AVERTED IN PUBLIC SERVICE SECTORS

1. THE THREAT OF KEY STRIKES (ONE ALREADY PARTIALLY UNDERWAY)
IN CRITICAL PUBLIC SERVICES WAS AVERTED SEPT 1 WHEN THE CABINET
AGREED TO APPOINT TEAMS TO NEGOTIATE WITH CIVIL AVIATION WORKERS
AND THE NURSES UNION. THE NURSES HAD, IN FACT, STAGED A ONE-DAY
"WARNING" STRIKE LAST WEEK AND THREATENED A NATIONWIDE WALKOUT
FOR SEPT 1 TO REINFORCE THEIR DEMAND FOR MORE PAY AND BETTER
WORKING CONDITIONS. UP UNTIL THE CABINET DECISION THEIR DEMANDS
HAD BEEN RESISTED BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR FEAR THAT CONCESSIONS
WOULD LEAD TO A FLOOD OF DEMANDS FROM OTHER SECTORS. IN AGREEING
TO NEGOTIATE, THE CABINET SPECIFIED THAT WHATEVER WOULD BE
GRANTED THE NURSES MUST BE BENEFITS FOR WHICH NO OTHER GROUP
OF WORKERS COULD QUALIFY.

2. THE 1200 CIVIL AVIATION WORKERS ARE CIVIL SERVANTS AND
SUBJECT TO GOVERNMENT WAGE SCALES. THEY ARE DEMANDING
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EQUIVALENCY IN WAGES TO EL AL AND ISRAEL AIRCRAFT INDUSTRIES

WORKERS. THE CIVIL AVIATION WORKERS WERE SERVED WITH A BACK-TO-WORK ORDER BY THE TRANSPORT MINISTRY ON AUGUST 30 IN ORDER TO AVERT A STRIKE THREATENED THAT MIDNIGHT THAT WOULD CLOSE DOWN BEN GURION AIRPORT AT ITS HIGH SEASON. (IN FACT, THE NEXT DAY WAS THE BUSIEST IN BEN GURION'S HISTORY.) THEY THEREUPON RESORTED TO A SLOW-DOWN WHICH BY SEPT 1 HAD LEFT THE AIRPORT IN CHAOS WITH THOUSANDS OF IRATE PASSENGERS AIMLESSLY MILLING AROUND AMID IPLES OF UNSORTED LUGGAGE AND WITH MANY FLIGHTS BYPASSING THEIR SCHEDULED STOPS AT BEN GURION.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THE STRIKES HAVE BEEN AVERTED FOR THE TIME BEING, HARD BARGAINING LIES AHEAD. DESPITE THE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES TO HEALTH SERVICES THEIR WALKOUT WOULD GENERATE, THE NURSES ENJOY MUCH PUBLIC SYMPATHY AS AN OVERWORKED PROFESSION IN A COUNTRY WITH A CHRONIC SHORTAGE OF NURSES. THERE IS LESS PUBLIC APPRECIATION FOR THE DEMANDS OF THE CIVIL AVIATION WORKERS. THE CABINET'S PROVISIO THAT WHATEVER IS OFFERED THE DISCONTENTED WORKERS WOULD NOT OPEN A BREACH IN THE DIKE OF GOVERNMENT WAGE POLICY WILL PROBABLY DO LITTLE TO PREVENT FRESH DEMANDS FROM OTHER LABOR GROUPS. INDEED, THERE ARE ALREADY INDICATIONS THAT A NEW PERIOD OF LABOR UNREST MAY BE IN THE OFFING. A BRIEF LOCKOUT OF THE 500 EMPLOYEES OF THE SAMSON TIRE FACTORY, A SUBSIDIARY OF ALLIANCE TIRE, END ON SEPT 2, WHILE A SIMILAR LOCKOUT OF THE ELCO ELECTRONICS COMPANY OF RAMAT GAN HAS BEEN UNDERWAY FOR A WEEK.
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